

*LINDERA SUBCORIACEA* (LAURACEAE) NEW TO ALABAMA

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ABSTRACT

*Lindera subcoriacea*, a candidate species for listing as federally endangered or threatened by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is reported new to Alabama. Its habitat in Alabama is discussed in relation to habitats for this species in adjacent southern Mississippi.

KEY WORDS: Rare plants, *Lindera subcoriacea*, Lauraceae, Alabama.

In 1983, *Lindera subcoriacea* B.E. Wofford was described as a new species restricted to evergreen shrub bogs in southern Mississippi and adjacent southeastern Louisiana (Wofford 1983). More recently, several populations have been discovered in the sandhills region of North Carolina by Julie Moore of the N.C. Dept. of Natural Resources, and in South Carolina and Georgia by Robert B. McCartney of Aiken, South Carolina. Additional surveys by the Mississippi Natural Heritage Program have resulted in a total of at least 17 localities in that state. After concerted search efforts in North Carolina, South Carolina, Mississippi, Georgia and Louisiana, *Lindera subcoriacea* is now known from a total of 34 sites. It has been predicted to occur in Alabama but apparently has never before been found in the state (Gordon *et al.* 1986). While surveying potential seepage bogs identified by the authors through using soil survey aerial photographs to predict natural community types, we added Alabama to the range of this rare, distinctive shrub. The collection data are as follows:

*Lindera subcoriacea* B.E. Wofford (Lauraceae). UNITED STATES. Alabama: Mobile Co.: hillside seepage shrub-herb bog on S side of Beverly-Jefferies Rd (Co Rd 96), 7.1 mi W of int. US 45 in Citronelle, 1.3 mi W of Ramey Rd and 1.6 mi E of Escatawpa River bridge; NWQ, SWQ, NEQ, NEQ, Sec. 2, T1N, R4W, Citronelle West 7.5' Quad., 31° 04' 49" N, 88° 21' 04" W, elev. 160-180 ft., 15 May 1989, Orzell & Bridges 9960 (FSU, MISSA, MO, NCU, SMU, TEX, VDB).

*Lindera subcoriacea* is occasional in partial shade of evergreen shrub-tree thickets within an extensive series of mid-slope hillside seepage bogs. Associated species include *Persea palustris*, *Magnolia virginiana*, *Gaylussacia*

*mosieri*, *Ilex coriacea*, *Myrica heterophylla*, *Myrica inodora*, *Smilax laurifolia*, *Nyssa sylvatica* var. *biflora*, *Rhus vernix*, *Pyrus arbutifolia* and *Osmunda cinnamomea*. Although many typical open seepage bog plants (*Sarracenia* spp., *Rhynchospora* spp., *Xyris* spp., Eriocaulaceae, Orchidaceae) occur within the seepage bogs at the site, they are not found in the immediate vicinity of *Lindera subcoriacea*. These habitats and associates are very similar to those reported from adjacent southern Mississippi (Wofford 1983; Gordon *et al.* 1986), and include the constant rangewide associates *Magnolia virginiana*, *Myrica heterophylla* and *Rhus vernix* (Gordon *et al.* 1986).

This record brings the number of *Lindera* species in Alabama to three. *Lindera benzoin* (L.) Blume is common in north Alabama, but infrequent southward, reaching southwest to Sumter, Marengo and Conecuh counties (Clark 1971), all at least 100 km from the Mobile County site for *L. subcoriacea*. Similarly, in Mississippi the ranges of these two taxa are separated by at least 120 km (Wofford 1983). In Alabama, *Lindera melissifolia* (Walt.) Blume, is known only from a single 19th century Buckley collection from Wilcox County (Clark 1971; Wofford 1983). *Lindera subcoriacea* differs from these by its faint aroma and elliptic to oblanceolate, subcoriaceous leaves with obtuse to rounded tips (Wofford 1983).

The flora and natural community ecology of the Gulf Coastal Plain of the southeastern United States remains inadequately studied and understood. This region undoubtedly still harbors many significant plant records. We have noted that many species of the Gulf coastal states which were previously known from very few collections, and presumed to be naturally very rare, are actually locally common in naturally restricted and isolated specific habitats. Systematic field work needs to be focused on this region while the opportunity remains to uncover previously unknown species populations and natural areas. Thirty meters from our *Lindera* site the landscape is being cleared and many significant plant records and natural areas are vanishing each year before being documented.

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